Kelley Blue Book Reports Wholesale Market Up, Domestics Start Year Better Than Imports

Company Launches Monthly 'Blue Book Market Report' Examining Weekly Value Trends, Site Traffic, Consumer Shopping

IRVINE, Calif., Feb. 17 /PRNewswire/ -- Kelley Blue Book, www.kbb.com, the leading provider of new- and used-car information, today reports an overall increase in recent wholesale market values, as reported in the company's new monthly Blue Book Market Report.

The all-new monthly Blue Book Market Report will examine new- and used-car data, residual values and consumer trending. In addition, Kelley Blue Book industry experts Eric Ibara, director of residual value consulting, and Juan Flores, director of vehicle valuation, will provide commentary in the publication. The first Blue Book Market Report will be distributed via email on Tuesday, February 17, 2009, and also will be posted each month to Kelley Blue Book's Media Center at www.kbb.com/media.

Throughout January 2009, Kelley Blue Book's vehicle valuation experts have witnessed climbing values in the truck and SUV segments. Values typically strengthen within these segments during the beginning of the year; however, the recent increase was higher than expected. A portion of the boost can be attributed to significantly depressed values experienced through mid- to late-2008 and decreasing fuel prices, both of which helped stabilize these segments. Kelley Blue Book expects a return to standard seasonal valuation behavior during the first quarter of 2009, although continued fluctuations in key factors may prevent this return to normalcy.

Performance within each of the vehicle segments was mixed. Domestic vehicles started the year with gains in the full-size and compact segments, and only a 1.4 percent decline in mid-size vehicles. This indicates returning demand for the domestic brands, which largely was absent leading up to the new year. Contrary to historical trends, import car segments were some of the worst performers in January 2009, falling between 1.5 percent and 2.7 percent for mid-size and full-size vehicles, respectively.

The Blue Book Market Report will further explore the state of the automotive industry by analyzing Kelley Blue Book Wholesale Values, which are produced on a weekly basis from actual transaction data with economical and regional factors applied. The report also will discuss developments in residual values, and how the market influences these percentages in a variety of segments. Furthermore, the newsletter will include data from both Eco Watch™ and Market Watch® studies conducted by Kelley Blue Book Marketing Research. Eco Watch tracks in-market new-car shoppers' opinions on fuel prices, alternative fuel-related technologies, environmental issues and vehicle consideration, while Market Watch measures new-car shopper behavior on kbb.com, capturing interest in specific vehicles.

"Our intent at Kelley Blue Book is to provide timely insight through our monthly Market Report into what our industry experts are seeing in the marketplace," said Eric Ibara, director of residual value consulting for Kelley Blue Book. "We look forward to regularly sharing a snapshot of what is occurring with new, used and residual values. We will also examine consumer trends and provide projections for where the market is heading, based on Kelley Blue Book's more than 80 years of valuation expertise."

If you would like to subscribe to the monthly Blue Book Market Report, please email pr@kbb.com. For more information on Kelley Blue Book, please visit www.kbb.com/media.

About Kelley Blue Book (www.kbb.com)

Since 1926, Kelley Blue Book, The Trusted Resource®, has provided vehicle buyers and sellers with the new and used vehicle information they need to accomplish their goals with confidence. The company's top-rated Web site, www.kbb.com, provides the most up-to-date pricing and values, including the New Car Blue Book® Value, which reveals what people actually are paying for new cars. The company also reports vehicle pricing and values via products and services, including software products and the famous Blue Book® Official Guide. According to the C.A. Walker Research Solutions, Inc. - 2008 Spring Automotive Web Site Usefulness Study, kbb.com is the most useful automotive information Web site among new and used vehicle shoppers, and half of online vehicle shoppers visit kbb.com. Kbb.com is a leading provider of new car prices, car reviews and news, used car blue book values, auto classifieds and car dealer locations. No other medium reaches more in-market vehicle shoppers than kbb.com.

SOURCE: Kelley Blue Book

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